

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF

POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 676.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9, 1876.

PRICE 1½d.

ROUGH SKETCHES FROM THE HEBRIDES.

IN THE LEWS.

BY AN ENGLISH LADY.

MILE beyond mile of undulating expanse of peat-bog, overgrown with saturated moss and grasses that wave mournfully in the wind, and brighten to reddish gold in the fitful gleams of sunlight. Gray, scattered, fantastic masses of rock everywhere push their barren summits up through the black dank peat and scant herbage, where here and there spring isolated tufts of purple heather, or of the delicate pink variety with its pale swaying bells. Everywhere the earth is moist, and gleaming with dark, peat-stained, stagnant water. Noisy brooklets and trout-streams run sparkling in their winding course, now foaming over loose rocks and pebbles, now flowing silently between miniature cliffs and chasms of gray cold granite, and now gliding through the half-liquid bogs, piled with their many peat-stacks. Tiny lochs or tarns nestle in every hollow and at the foot of every crag, gleaming white and cold wherever the eye may rest, and glancing far away to the horizon; or their many waters, lashed to fury by the wind, which drives and whistles pitilessly over the sterile land, break in foam-crested waves and clouds of spray on their stony mimic shores. Not a tree to be seen; not a shrub, not a flower. At long uncertain intervals are a few groups of wretched, beehive-shaped, straw-thatched huts, many of them windowless, most chimneyless; a solitary farmhouse, surrounded by scant strips and patches of cultivation; a lonely school-house. In the faint far distance, pale and blurred and purple against the mist-hung horizon, rise range beyond range of the lofty Harris Hills. Save for the moaning of the wind and the dull thud of the Atlantic breaking on the shore, which is dimly discernible in the near distance, an absolute silence reigns; for here no bees hum, no birds sing, and the occasional mournful cry of a sea-gull or curlew is the only reminder of the feathered race. A few small herds of sheep or West Highland cattle grazing the

sweet scanty grass, and tended by bare-legged children; and an occasional group of two or three women or girls carrying on their backs great baskets full of peat, are the only signs of life.

Looking at these girls, with their sweet, fair, wind-bronzed faces and tawny hair, their supple shapely limbs and picturesque dress, one wonders how their lives flow on from year to year in this wild land of desolation; and what can be the sensations, events, and interests that fill up their lives, passed so far away from the din and turmoil of cities, and suffice to satisfy their minds and hearts. How perfectly these beautiful girls harmonise with their wild surroundings and stormy wind-blown skies. The rare gleams of sunshine glance in the blue of their eyes, deepen the rich glowing red of their cheeks and lips, and glorify the tawny gold of their hair, seeming to pour out upon them the sun's love as well as his light and warmth. The wild wind that wakes the sea to snow-crested beauty; that whirls over the treeless tracts of gold-tipped grass, low bent beneath its breath; that drives the massy clouds faster and faster through the changing sky, for ever renewing the shadows that chase across the mountains, striking in infinite variety the chords and harmonies of each exquisite tint and colour, now darkening the blue to purple and gray, now brightening the brown to rose, the green to gold: this wild northern wind seems to claim these girls for its own, and lends its aid to increase their simple beauty, for it wraps them in its rude embrace till their graceful limbs stand sculptured beneath the short, dark-blue clinging petticoat against the dull blue background of the hills and skies, the moving folds of their short skirts leaving bare the symmetry of their limbs and well-turned feet and ankles. The very baskets, peat-laden, which hang suspended from their shoulders by a belt of plaited straw, which is passed round their chests, add richness of tone and picturesqueness of outline to them and to the rugged landscape behind them.

The fiery beam the sun sent earthwards to tinge the hills and the grass with a fleeting radiance,

and to convert the innumerable lochs into seeming bits of bluest sky, is dying out; the gray clouds gather closer and hang lower, blotting out the distant heights; and the wind whistles shriller, and brings with it driving, drenching, blinding sheets of mountain mist. Two women walking fast beneath the burden of their peat-filled creels grow fainter; the red of their head-kerchiefs and the blue of their skirts melt away into the blurred distance and disappear. The surge beats angrily on the rain-washed shore; the whole dreary island is a uniform gray, without form, and void, seeming only to hold a place on the earth at all in the likeness of a dim shrouded ghost.

A bare-headed, half-naked little child runs by me, its small feet pattering over the sodden ground, its little rosy face washed clean. I stop it and ask the way to some shelter, for all sign of huts has disappeared. The mite looks at me with big perplexed blue eyes; one hand finds the way to its mouth, the other to its head; it speaks no English; so I smile and nod good-bye, and on it trots, the bare pink legs and arms gleaming in the wet; and I follow along the dripping road till the little figure turns into a low dark doorway, and I enter close behind. The darkness is so great within, that for a minute or two I can see nothing, but soon the ruddy glow from the peat-fire illumines the room and its occupants. I am in a long, tolerably lofty shed, whose slanting roof is thatched with straw fastened down by ropes, to which are attached heavy stones. There is a double thickness of wall, the inner of peat mud, the outer of large, loosely piled stones, on the top of which grow grass and moss, forming a narrow grassy path round the building (if it can be called such), just below the sloping roof. There are neither windows nor chimney, the smoke from the fire finding an escape through various holes in the remarkably well-ventilated roof, through which the continuous drizzling rain is freely entering, making little pools all over the smooth-trodden mud floor. The shed is divided into two parts, the smaller end being the common sleeping-room, and the larger being appropriated as general house-place by the whole family, which comprises two cows, two sheep, and a score of ducks, and hens, and chickens, the latter clucking and pecking all about the floor in company with several small children and a baby. The door and the position of the fire make a rude division between the biped and quadruped occupants of the establishment.

As I stand wet and forlorn in the doorway, looking in, a woman rises from a wooden bench in a dark corner, and comes towards me, inviting me to enter and take shelter in a soft musical voice. She is very tall and slight; and in the flickering brightness of the firelight I see that she is handsome, with a dark gentle face and large soft eyes. I see also that she is weeping, and at the same time I hear a stifled sob from some hidden region in the darkness beyond. Murmuring an apology for my

evidently ill-timed intrusion, I am turning to go, when the woman lays her hand on my arm, and says: 'It is raining ferry heavily; you had better stay whatever.' I hesitate still, not wishing to intrude on any private trouble, but a gentle 'You are welcome,' decides me to take a seat on the bench. A broad iron pan or 'girdle' is suspended over the fire from a hook fastened into the roof, and on it is a large oat-cake baking. I am very hungry as well as cold and wet, which sensation is perhaps visible in my face as my eyes rest on the crisply browning cake, for a girl, with tawny hair and brown eyes that have evidently not long been free of tears, rises from an opposite corner and brings me a large piece of the oat-cake from the pan; and while I am gratefully eating it, at a sign from the elder woman, she goes to the other end of the shed and returns in a minute with a glass of milk.

'You are in trouble?' I say presently, gently arresting the woman's attention by laying my hand on hers, as my ear catches another stifled sob from the room beyond.

'Yes,' she answers, wiping her eyes; 'it is in the herring-fishery. Seven of our Lews men haf not been heard of whatever; there haf been awful storms here, and off the coast by Aberdeen, and seven men haf not come back at all. One of them wass my daughter's laddie; and to-day it is she wass to haf gone home to him in Stornoway as his married wife, and now'— And she hid her face and wept, but continued presently: 'My own boy wass to the fishing, but he, thank the dear Lord, is safe whatever.'

I had heard of those storms and of those missing men; and as I thought of the poor young girl and her sad wedding-day, and heard her subdued sobs from the sleeping-place, I felt inclined to weep too. The child whose pattering little feet had led me to this shelter came towards me with puzzled wide blue eyes, and pulling at my dress, held up to my mouth a piece of oat-cake, as though eating were a panacea for all woes; and at the same time the baby, who, tired of rolling about with the chickens, had wandered to the other side of the fire, and got turned over by an amiable sheep possessed of an equally inquiring mind, which had come up to take a look at the stranger, set up a most dismal and prosaic howl. His mother dried her eyes and sprang after him, sending the too adventurous sheep baaing away; and in her motherly indignation that her baby should have been treated so, set to work scolding and cuffing the children all round, till all was confusion and babel. Under cover of the general excitement, and feeling myself in the way, I stooped down and kissed the boy at my knee, slipped a florin into his chubby hand, said good-bye to the pretty girl who had spoken to me, thanked the mother, as she paused an instant to take breath, and left the hut, vehemently shaking my garments, and offering an inward prayer that I might be leaving that hut alone, as I entered it. The

rain has ceased now, and the mists are slowly rising. Before going away, I cannot resist the temptation of peeping through the rude hole which forms the bedroom window. What a sleeping-place for a large family! No table nor chair, no carpet, no hanging of any sort, no convenience for washing. A plank supported on two stones; two beds let into the wall like ship-berths, and covered with old patch-work quilts, under which I can see the frayed edge of a dirty blanket; and a small square of distorting mirror nailed to the wall, compose the entire furniture of the room. On one of these rude beds lies a girl with her face turned to the wall. I can see she is not asleep by the convulsive heaving of her breast; her hair is loose, and is hanging bright and long over the faded old coverlet. I can just see the outer half of a brown eyebrow, a large tear-swelled lid, and long thick brown lashes; a rather thin but finely moulded curve of cheek and chin; a small ear, and the long line of the sun-burnt throat, with the snowy neck below; a red handkerchief lies loosely above the waving hair, and the dark-blue petticoat is short enough to let me see the round brown limbs and pretty feet. Between her hands lies an open Bible. Poor child! She is very young to suffer so, but fortunately Time heals most wounds; and perhaps some day she will find happiness with some other fisher-lad, and will live to make his simple home bright and to hear his children call her mother. I go away picking my way through the slushy road, with my heart heavy for those I am leaving behind, and thinking pitifully of the many dangers encountered by the men who ply their perilous trade on the storm-tossed waters of the Hebrides; and when again I see the 'caller herrin' I shall know why

Wives and mithers maist despairin'
Ca' them *lives o' men*.

Not an hour since I had been wondering vaguely what could be the interests, pains, and pleasures that serve to fill the lives of the women who live in this desolate dreary land; and now I feel that I have indeed been answered. This little tragedy is as a wide open door through and by which I can see down a long vista of simple joys and sorrows, terrors, anxieties, happy endings to long suspense, tragic death-blows to hope, tender love, and domestic happiness. I see now that buried away though they are from the great outer world, with its strugglings and strivings, successes and failures, affluence and misery, still they cannot cut themselves adrift from humanity, but must bear the cross or reap the blessing in common brotherhood with all human lives.

I walk on past Garrynahine with its pretty hotel, principally resorted to by lovers of the gentle art; past the lovely loch that lies at the foot of high rugged hills, and looks towards the open sea with its deep-blue glance, on along the bog-bordered road for two miles to the old 'Druidical temple' of Turusachan Callernish (the place of pilgrimage on the Bleak Headland), where it stands on a grassy rising peat-knoll commanding a wide view of sea, lake, and mountain. These giant stones stand in the form of a long shafted irregular cross, branching from the four sides of a double circle, within the inner of which is a rude kind of altar sunk in the ground. Until the year of the famine they were

raised only three or four feet above the ground, and then, in order to provide employment for the starving inhabitants, Sir James Matheson, the owner of the entire island, had the surrounding peat cut away to the depth of thirteen feet, the tallest stones being now seventeen feet above the peat. Their effect is most imposing and weird, rising fantastic, tall, and gray from the green-clad peat; and seen by moonlight it must require a very slight stretch of fancy to imagine them the grayly draped, majestic forms of the ancient Druid priests, standing there stiff and motionless as frozen stone, keeping a jealous watch for ever, over the dreary land where they once held sway and where they worshipped their ancient gods. The wild wind murmurs and whistles, and moans round and through them, and the shifting shadows thrown by the masses of scudding rain-clouds play over and about them till they seem to be swaying, and turning, and whispering in a strange unknown tongue.

At last I leave them behind me, and retrace my steps on past Garrynahine, with its wild lone beauty, past the barefooted children that have followed me from their various beehives; past the little manse, and the school, and the doctor's house, back through mile after mile of loch-studded boglands; past the little mound, surmounted by its cairn of stones, where tradition tells of a foul murder committed; back past the spot where a skeleton was found in the bog; past the islanded loch where two girls were drowned whilst resting from carrying their peat-creels; back and on, while the mist descends more densely than ever, sweeping heavily across the skies, and the hills, and the grass, and blots out me and the dreary landscape together.

THE ARAB WIFE.

A TALE OF THE POLYNESIAN SEAS.

CHAPTER X.—APOSTASY.

WHEN I awoke from my fainting-fit, my head was pillowed on the lap of Fatima, who was bathing my wounds. The wives of Nizam were present; and on looking round I found that I was actually in the zenana, probably in Fatima's room. Fatima was unveiled, but the others were so swathed that I could only see their large dark eyes. I did not know exactly what had passed or was passing; but soon I remembered, and despite the presence of the veiled females, I flung my arms around Fatima, who returned my embrace with equal ardour.

Nizam made his appearance. 'It is death by our law for a Christian to see an Arab girl unveiled.'

For the life of me I could only respond stupidly: 'Is it?'

'You have seen Fatima unveiled. What must be done to you?'

I replied stolidly: 'I must die, I suppose.' I remembered what he had said, but did not recall it to him, being too proud; but I looked it.

He said: 'Yes; I promised you life and my daughter, and I will keep my word; but the law must not be broken.'

Even then I was so stupid that I could not see what was coming.

He repeated: 'The law must not be broken. If a man who is not a believer look upon an Arab woman, he must die, or' (here he smiled at me) 'become a believer and marry her.' Having delivered this ultimatum, he smiled again, and beckoning to the veiled ladies, departed, leaving me alone with Fatima.

I was quite wide awake now, and observed that my fair companion was beaming with uncontrollable joy, and ready at a moment's notice to display her transports. Seeing that I looked bewildered and unhappy, she became seized with sudden timidity, and waited anxiously for what I might say.

'Fatima,' I commenced, 'I must die, or give up my religion.'

She glanced at me from under her beautiful long eyelashes, but said nothing. Never had she looked to greater advantage.

'Fatima,' I continued, passing my arm round her yielding waist, 'it is hard to die so young, especially when one is beloved; do you remember our first meeting?'

She never spoke, but gradually pressed closer to me, until her head was reclining on my shoulder and her breath fanned my cheek.

I went on: 'Do you remember how you told me of your mother, and how you wished to be a Christian, and besought me to teach you the tenets of your mother's faith?'

She never spoke, but her bosom heaved tumultuously; she encircled my neck with one arm, and with the other sought for my hand, which she pressed passionately.

I still continued: 'Do you remember how you promised to worship as I worshipped, to eat as I ate, to live as I lived, Fatima?'

Surely the wit of all her sex was in her at that moment. Had she entreated me, I would have insisted on being a martyr; had she prayed me with the tenderest words to obey her father, I am certain that I would have made fine speeches, and shouted to Nizam to take my head. But the girl was actuated by such a pure love for unworthy me, that instinctively she comprehended the danger of any opposition. Her tongue did not speak; but her eyes, her beauty, her pleading arms, spoke the sensations of her heart. She pressed her lips to mine suddenly with an ardour that astonished me, and sank back swooning, overcome by the vehemence of her emotions.

Feeling somehow that I was to blame for having thus wrought upon her susceptibilities, I strove to restore her to consciousness, and was rewarded with the most bewitching smile. I caught her, and pressed her in a transport of uncontrollable love to my heart, crying: 'Dear one, you said to me that you would worship at my shrine, and partake of my cup, and would be wholly mine, for love's sake. Now hear me say that since the Fates have ordained it, I will worship as you worship, and will partake of your cup, and will be wholly yours.'

I cannot depict the rapture that ensued. Far rather let me plead in extenuation of my apostasy, that I was very young, that I had never been properly imbued with religious feeling, that I was desperately in love, and that Fatima had completely humoured me by giving me no chance for

heroics, and by fanning to the utmost my tenderness for her.

Nizam entered shortly, whereupon Fatima coquettishly assumed her veil.

'Well, Feringhi, do you accept the conditions, and marry my daughter?'

'I do, Al Reis; and let me say that in giving me Fatima you bestow on me a jewel that I could never deserve were I to live a thousand years.'

'She is a pearl, a veritable Taj Mahal!' responded the gratified father. 'And she has made a convert to our faith, by which the whole household will inherit Paradise. My son, come with me, for I have much to say and to hear from you.'

I accompanied him to the little audience-room; and we sat there for many hours arranging the preliminaries of my new life. It was arranged that I should go on a cruise with Abou, accompanied by a Mohammedan teacher he had brought from Oman, and that instruction in the faith should be then imparted. Next he gave me the history of his adventures with the cargo, which he had sold to great advantage, my share coming to twenty thousand ashras of gold. Then he questioned me as to the papers; and I gave him a list of Dutch words which I had compiled from them, but at the same time explained the impossibility of the task, and recommended opening the casket with a cold chisel. This, however, he would not hear of, but said we had a lifetime before us, and chance might favour us.

In my turn, I asked that I might have the writing-desk of the Dutch captain to keep the papers in; to which he cordially assented; and gave me besides whatever I might choose among his stores, or in the cabins of *The Shark*, for the fitting up of the pirogue, which he agreed should be named *Fatima*. We had the mid-day meal together, and parted on the most cordial terms, my conscience light as that of the lover who has obtained a father's consent.

I sought Abou and told him the news; whereupon my good old friend threw himself into my arms and embraced me so joyfully that it took away my breath. It was a purely unselfish delight, for Abou was Nizam's right-hand man, and might have been excused for feeling jealous; but he, on the contrary, felt the greatest pleasure at the news, and had an attachment for me of which I was unworthy, and which I fear I requited after a poor fashion in the end. I told him Nizam's generous offer about fitting out the pirogue, and he promised to see after it all, and to bring the writing-desk on board as well. Released from these cares, I returned to Nizam's room, and consulted with him as to whether I might see Fatima during the few days that intervened before we set sail. But my future father-in-law explained that such a thing was perfectly impossible, not to be thought of for a moment, and that I would not see Fatima again until the moment of the marriage ceremony. He proposed, seeing disappointment in my face, that we should inaugurate a hunt after the Malays; but I pointed out to him that in the wood that stretched beyond the mountains, the arrows of the sumpitans would be more deadly than our pistols, and that the game was not worth hunting anyhow. So he dropped the idea, and left me to my own resources, which were extremely limited. Having nothing better to do, I whiled away the time by committing to memory, and afterwards copying in

Arabic writing, one of the poems of the Moullakat which Abdallah had recited to me; the third I think it is, about a love adventure of Antar. This, with stepping down a few times to the ruins of the Malay town to see after the Papuans, filled up the longest, slowest days I ever spent.

The Arabs waited until Friday, which is with them supposed to be specially lucky, and is indeed their Sabbath, though they make no difference between it and other days. On that auspicious day, *The Fatima* sailed on her first cruise, with myself as the nominal commander, though Abou had real charge, as indeed it was his vessel. The wind was from the north-east, which would have been bad for a proa, but *The Fatima* could sail within five points of the wind, and accordingly could get along by making a short tack and then a long one, which brought us satisfactorily out of the channel. Then we crowded all sail straight for the coast of Burmah and the Straits of Malacca.

The Fatima had one great advantage over the proas in her appearance; she looked like a French lugger, but was incomparably lighter, swifter, and more buoyant; and the spars were made of light material that would never break, and could be easily handled by two men. A crew of three could take *The Fatima* anywhere. She was flush-decked; and by battening down the hatches of the forecabin and the cabin, not a particle of water could get in; and we could defy a typhoon in the open ocean. We had a wheel to steer with; and the arrangements below for cooking and comfort were as great as in some merchant-vessels. Our capacity for stowing away cargo was considerable; and in short the pirogue was really worthy of the affection with which we regarded it.

We ran along under full sail, making extraordinary speed, and gliding along in a ghost-like sort of way. But the wind, which at first had been quite gentle, increased shortly after we lost sight of Celebes, and soon blew a regular gale. Our craft behaved delightfully, climbing up the waves and racing down them without effort, riding the water like a storm-bird. But the Papuans whom we brought to row the sweeps in case of a calm, by no means liked the look of things, and evidently thought we were crazy in not taking shelter under the volcanic islands that were far to leeward. But greatly to their horror, though the wind increased, we kept steadily on, until even the Arabs began to look a little white at matters. At last the man at the wheel left it, refusing to steer unless we changed our course and scudded before the wind. I took the helm myself, and ordered him and the others to go below and sleep. Abou seconding this, they retired, though evidently in great dudgeon. The wind went down towards evening; and when they came up again they were somewhat ashamed to find the vessel all right, the sea going down, and the sun setting in peaceful splendour.

Abou was steering, and Abdallah, who was with us, came up and complimented him upon the pirogue, which he owned was a perfect marvel. On the third day we sighted a square-rigged vessel, coming evidently from some port in Hindustan, and making for a Chinese harbour. The wind was light and variable, and only the lighter sails of the stranger were drawing, the heavy canvas

of the topsails and courses hanging idly against the masts. But *The Fatima's* sails being of fine material, except the foresail, which was of the strongest stuff we could find, drew splendidly, and we glided onward rapidly, nearing the ship in an oblique direction, as if we were steering for the Irrawadi.

I was lying on my carpet on the quarter-deck, and Abou issued directions, Abdallah acting as his second in command. We soon were within speaking distance, and the stranger hailed us: 'What ship is that?'

Abdallah nodded to me, and I shouted back: '*The Fatima* of Sarawak, bound to Bombay.'

'What's your cargo?'

'Palm-oil and seed-pearl.'

'Will you take letters to Bombay?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Then come on board.'

Both steersmen having the same intention, *The Fatima* glided alongside, and was secured at once to the ship. I stepped on board, for the adventure promised to be curious, and was welcomed by the captain, who told me his ship was the *Moulmein* of Bombay, bound to Canton with opium. He asked me to step into his cabin, and produced sherry and biscuits; but I excused myself on the ground of its being Ramadan, which indeed it was. If I had tasted anything, of course I must have spared them, which would have been false to my Arab friends, and ruin to all my selfish hopes.

The captain seemed surprised at my English; but I told him that I was born at Delhi, and had served in the Irregular Horse. While we were speaking, and he was complimenting my excellent English, there arose a tremendous yell and the sound of fierce fighting. He excused himself to me, and was about to rush out, when I tripped him up and told him he was a prisoner. He struggled fiercely; but I was too strong for him, and during the scuffle that ensued, he fell heavily on the cabin floor and became insensible.

Taking the precaution of binding him securely hand and foot, I emerged from the cabin with the captain's revolver, discharging the barrels as I came on, and flinging the pistol itself at the head of the chief-mate, a great raw-boned Scotchman. Before he could recover himself, I drew my canjeer with my left hand, gave an Arab yell, and charged the line of sailors who had formed near the forecabin. Being seconded by the pirates, I drove them into the forecabin, and then and there announced to them that if they would surrender, we would content ourselves with the cargo; but if they did not come out and submit to be tied, we would burn the ship.

Upon this they came out submissively and gave up their weapons, and being asked if they would help in unloading, they said they would; so we did not tie them. The opium was in large whitish balls about the size of a Dutch cheese. It was not packed in boxes, but loose; so that the more hands we had the better. In consideration of this assistance, we did not plunder the forecabin, but ransacked thoroughly the cabins. I secured a chronometer, thermometer, barometer, quadrant, and set of charts, which I had wanted badly. There was a little money, but so little, that I thought it belonged to the captain, and so left it where I found it. But we took cooking

utensils, table-cloths, a sofa, a table, and the square big hammock of the captain; and then, finding that there was not much more to take, we bade them farewell, having loaded with as much opium as we could conveniently stow, though more than half remained in the vessel's hold.

Abou, Abdallah, and I then held a council of war as to what should be done. We were then steering for the Straits of Malacca, and going none the worse, it seemed, for our heavy cargo.

Abdallah remarked: 'If we get back to Gezireh with opium, we shall not get thanks from Nizam.'

'Well, but,' I replied, 'this is Abou's boat, and Nizam only gets a share as chief. And Nizam can take it to Bushire or Mohammerah, or even Bombay, if it comes to that, in *The Shark*, and dispose of it there.'

Abou said: 'Can't we sell it ourselves?'

'Of course we can,' cried Abdallah. 'Let us go to Shin' (China).

The idea was not a bad one. And our course was altered accordingly. The vessel we had plundered soon spied us coming back, and evidently imagined we were going to make another attack, perhaps for the sake of completing the plunder. We could see them busily wetting their sails, and doing their utmost to get away; but we passed them peaceably, the pirogue going wonderfully fast in light winds.

Soon the wind increased a little, not enough for a square-rigged vessel, but just enough to allow *The Falima* to shew her best pace; and we made a quick passage without adventure to the mouth of the Canton Harbour, or, as it is called, the Bocca Tigris. Numerous pilot-boats came out and wanted to take us up, but we steadily refused, without giving any reason for our conduct. The fourth pilot was not so readily repulsed. He put his finger to the side of his nose: 'Me savee youee pigeon.'

'What do you say?'

'Me savee whatee got shippee; no papers gottee, opium gottee; all same me pigeon.'

I nodded assent.

He chuckled. 'Wait piecee. I go bring gentleman fixee you pigeon.' Saying this he darted into his boat and made for shore.

Abdallah and Abou were very curious as to what had passed, and I explained, and added what I had heard at mess, that opium was not a legal commodity in China, and that it had to be smuggled in.

Before nightfall we were hailed by a long rakish junk, rowed by a great many oars, that came down the stream with marvellous speed. From this craft we were boarded by an American, who offered us so many taels for all the opium we had on board, assuring us that he would run it through on his own responsibility and with his own craft. He certainly looked at our vessel with surprise, but he asked no questions.

I consulted with my friends, who said that we had better not take Chinese silver, if we could get American or German; so I asked him if he would mind paying in dollars. 'Not the least,' he said; in fact, he preferred it.

So we accompanied his junk to a small island behind Macao, the Portuguese settlement, where the transfer was made in four trips; and departed with a very handsome sum in bright silver. Inflated with this lucky venture, Abdallah wanted to

continue the cruise, but I reminded him that there was somebody waiting for me in Gezireh who would not thank them for prolonging my absence.

This argument was conclusive; and we returned to Gezireh, my instruction in the Mohammedan faith having, I fear, been sadly neglected!

SINGING ROUND THE WORLD.

CONCLUDING PAPER.

To finish off their musical excursion in the southern hemisphere, the Kennedies visited New Zealand, which involved a sea-voyage of some fourteen hundred miles from Melbourne. The power and quality of the steamers render this not a difficult undertaking. The passage was, however, rough; and at the end of three days it was a relief to come in sight of the towering peaks of the middle island of New Zealand. The landing was at Port Chalmers, in Otago, from which a railway-train speedily took the party to Dunedin. This thriving modern town, which dates no farther back than 1848, appeared to rise 'in a grand amphitheatre at the head of the harbour, with a picturesque lofty background of bush-covered heights. The town seemed a great wave of streets washed up against the hills, with houses dispersed like spray among the wooded hollows around.'

As Dunedin was settled mostly by Scotch, the Kennedies had arrived in the midst of a population ready to give them a hearty reception. They sang the songs of the old country to delighted audiences. People vied to be acquainted with them. They had consequently opportunities of acquiring a good knowledge of the place. Their concerts lasted five weeks, ending in Burns's birthday, January 25, 1874—a long time, considering the size of the town; but one peculiarity of the colonies is, that public entertainments run longer than in England or Scotland, because, as we presume, the novelty is greater. The party were struck with the prevalent air of industry and substantial wealth. 'Many of the early settlers are now in the character of successful merchants, and have retired, or are retiring, in favour of their descendants. The shopkeepers are all in a steady way of business. As to the working-classes, they are in a land of plenty. Every man can clothe, feed, and educate his family, and have something to spare.' From the comparative scarcity of labour, wages are high. Domestic servants 'can save money and dress handsomely.' But that, we beg to say, they can generally do at home if they have a mind. It is gratifying to have the evidence of Mr Kennedy that no poor people are to be seen in Dunedin. 'There is,' he says, 'none of that poverty verging on starvation which is so painful to see and hear of at home.' Doubtless, one reason for this agreeable state of things is that the foul demon intemperance has not yet eaten into the vitals of the community.

The party spent six weeks in travelling through Otago. As the province is as yet provided only

in a partial way with railways, the dependence was on 'a red-bodied, yellow-wheeled coach, with a staunch-looking team of four horses,' furnished by a coach proprietor, who likewise provided a careful driver. At Tuapeka, the oldest gold-field in the province, they found a large number of well-dressed Chinese, walking about with their fashionably attired English wives, and who had apparently a relish for singing. At the concerts, they invariably occupied the very front of the front seats. Occasionally, the party encountered immigrants who, being unsuitable, ought not to have left home. 'One day a man was mourning the lack of employment, but he turned out to be a glass-eye maker!'

At a place called Popotunoa, they were the guests of a hospitable clergyman, and to help his infant church, they gave a concert, the only eligible hall for the entertainment being the barn of a neighbouring sheep-station. Everything was very primitive. 'The seats were planks laid upon bags of grain, and an open loft with sacks of chaff served as a gallery. On the platform, which was a few boards covered with carpets, stood a table with a globe-lamp, and on our small travelling piano bloomed a neat bouquet of flowers. The audience soon assembled. We saw the folks coming across the moorland, through the long grass—men, women, lads, lasses, mothers, children, shepherds, servants, and people on horseback. Every shepherd brought his "collie" with him, so that the barn swarmed with dogs. The horses were tied outside. The barn was not brilliantly lighted. Chandeliers were made of crossed pieces of wood, each with two holes, into which candles were placed.' As the chandeliers were neither level nor very steady, some inconveniences were experienced, but trifles are not minded in matters of this kind, and the concert gave unqualified satisfaction. The only untoward event was the howling of one of the shepherd's dogs, which got its head accidentally jammed in a round cat-hole in the door—the yell it set up coming in awkwardly during the pathetic singing of the 'Land o' the Leal.'

The party at length got to Invercargill, which has now a railway reaching to a port at which steamers arrive from Melbourne. Thence they went to Winton, where, by permission of the inhabitants, they gave a concert in the schoolroom. In the course of their travels they reached Christchurch, the capital of Canterbury. Here, though mainly settled by English, the Scottish songs were as highly relished as in Dunedin. Wellington, Auckland, and a number of other places were successively visited. Often the roads were so bad that some suffering was experienced; but on the whole, the party, who took things philosophically, enjoyed themselves, and were pleased with their musical success. Of the magnificent scenery and geological phenomena there are pretty full accounts, but though passages are well worth quoting, we pass them over for want of space.

The Kennedies left New Zealand with deep

regret; their last words being, that they shall never look on its like again! Their object was next to visit San Francisco; but to do so, they had to go a long way round about. First, they went to Melbourne, and then to Sydney, whence, in June 1875, they proceeded in a steamer which had to call at Auckland. Looking at a map, it will be seen that the voyage from Auckland in a northerly direction is right through the groups of small islands which dot the Pacific Ocean, and that the Sandwich Islands are situated in the route to California. The vessel in which were the party of Scottish vocalists had a delightful run to Honolulu, the capital of Hawaii. 'All was sunshine and pleasure. A meeting was held in the saloon, and an entertainment committee elected, which subdivided itself into a concert-programme committee and a dance committee. During the day of the concert the programme was tacked up outside the cabin, with such notices as "Boats and life-buoys may be ordered at ten." The entertainments were held sometimes in the saloon and sometimes on deck, according to the temperature. Nearly all the passengers could sing, and our little piano was brought out of the hold for the occasion. Like the concerts, the dances were a great feature.' As in all English sea-going vessels, Sunday was kept with due reverence. Morning service was held in the cabin. The captain read the Litany, the purser officiated as clerk, and a good choir was organised among the passengers. The trip from Auckland to the Sandwich Islands occupied sixteen days; the thermometer at no time standing at more than eighty-three degrees. Time went swiftly on, and the Kennedies look back on this as a bright spot in their lives. The vessel remained at Honolulu only a day or two to take on fresh passengers, and then proceeded on the voyage to San Francisco. The journey from Australia by way of Honolulu and San Francisco is fast rising in favour, but it is expensive, as in the circumstances it can hardly fail to be. In thirty-one days in all from Sydney, the party of Scottish vocalists arrived at San Francisco, ready for the excursion across America from the Pacific to the Atlantic.

Plunged into the whirl of affairs in California, the party visited various places at which there are monster hotels, of which we have some amusing descriptions. Then, they went off eastward by the cars, taking Salt Lake City, the capital of Mormondom, by the way. Pushing along amidst all the imposing scenery of the Rocky Mountains, the party are sufficiently shocked with the relentless spirit of American advertising. The grandest points to be admired are stuck over with puffs in huge letters of some article recommended to purchasers. 'Admiring a high peak, our eyes rested on "Dyspepsia Pills"—falling into raptures over a deep ravine, we were shocked with "Vinegar Bitters"—meditating on the grand vista of precipices, we were told nothing equalled the "Patent Horse Oil"—and while noting the beautiful effects of light and shade, we were suddenly

called upon to "Try the Rising Sun Polish." Business has robbed even the Rocky Mountains of romance. The train, too, has its vagaries. Going steadily along a rolling prairie at the modest pace of twenty miles an hour, there is suddenly an incomprehensible stop. The engine-driver leaps off, with a tin can in his hand, and makes a "bee-line" for some spot on the nearer rising ground; the conductor follows him in double-quick time. Then, from out the long stretch of cars swarms an eager crowd of passengers, armed with bottles, pannikins, jugs, tumblers; and snatching up a cup, we stumble and dash over the hollow and knoll, till we join the throng that gathers round the centre of attraction—a soda spring! The demand for drinks in a dry and exhausting atmosphere is overpowering. Every train carries cans of water for the passengers, and the temptations presented by a soda spring are of course irresistible.

The party turn aside to visit Chicago. The throng in the Bunkum Hotel was awful. In the dining-hall no fewer than three hundred persons. The waiters bring what is ordered by the guests: "Involuntarily we hear the order given by a gentleman sitting near us—"Bring me fried smelt, roast-mutton and jelly, keff haub, pork and beans, squash, mashed turnips, boiled rice, tomatoes, potatoes, and a cup of coffee!"—the lady beside him adding: "The same for me!" At these dinners there is a large consumption of ice, in the use of which the Americans are proficient. From experience, we can testify to this, as also to the commendable feature, the almost entire absence of beer, wine, or spirits in the dinners at American hotels, where any drinking of alcoholic liquors takes place separately in the bar or general lounging-room. There is no difficulty in either getting to or departing from Chicago, for two hundred and fifty trains arrive and leave every day. By one of these the party proceeded to Detroit on the St Clair River, and were ferried across, locomotive, train, and all, to the Canadian shore. Once more in British territory, the Kennedies felt at home, and there was before them no end of singing if they liked to pursue it illimitably. Travellers in Canada must reckon on the vicissitudes of climate. We can remember the alarm we experienced at London, not far from the river St Clair, when the snow began to fall on the first of November. At the same place the party of vocalists awoke on the last day of October and saw the ground white with snow. Winter is no doubt a jolly time in Canada, but not always satisfactory to those who have to travel to distant places in the midst of a snow-storm. Still, by means of sleighs, on one of which the little piano was securely fastened, the party prosecuted their singing operations. Defying weather, and with prodigious pluck and animal spirits, they laughed and sang their way through the country. At last, in sleighing from Listowel to Wingham, they encountered a somewhat sobering misadventure. We let the writer of the volume tell the story in his own way.

'This day we had to travel twenty-two miles. The thermometer stood twenty degrees below zero—a gale was blowing right in our teeth—a fierce snow-storm was raging—and altogether it looked as wild a day as could be imagined. Not a soul was out that could possibly keep indoors. The

snow was drifting and falling rapidly, all tracks of vehicles had been obliterated, and we had to plough slowly along. The horses struggled amongst the great mounds of frosty, powdery snow. Dense wreaths swept along the road; and though our two vehicles were only three yards apart, yet we were continually losing sight of each other. We were driving in a white night. The cold was awfully bitter. The foam hung from the horses' nostrils in long white icicles. The lapels of our greatcoats were frozen as hard as a board, and our cheeks were glazed with scales of ice. We were completely white with snow, like human statues. My brother, who sat alongside of me, had two blobs of ice on his eyes, like ice-spectacles, and he could not see till, after some difficulty, he got them picked off. Then his left cheek became white—he was frost-bitten! Snatching up a handful of snow from the buffalo robe, I vigorously rubbed his face till the blood began to circulate. All at once he cried: "Look at your nose!" but as that was rather a difficult feat in optics, I replied: "What's the matter?" And he said: "It's as white as anything!" So I excitedly rubbed my nose, or rather the place my nose used to be, for I could not feel it. Then my brother's cheek blanched again, and I applied more snow—after which my nose became marble, and it had to be polished once more. Then his cheek, then my nose—nose, cheek, nose, cheek, nose—till a natural hue had set in. At length we reached a small hotel, and though only four miles from our destination, yet we all ran in and warmed ourselves at a stove—all, except my brother and I, who had been frost-bitten. It is not considered safe to trust yourself near a fire after such an occurrence, as then a swollen ear or nose is apt to remain a big ear or nose always, or turn into an open sore for the winter. Therefore, to avoid such a fate, we two remained in the dreary cold outside, tramping back and forward to keep some life in our feet. But as the horses ran a risk of getting chilled, we soon started, and arrived in Wingham. The driver vowed he "wouldn't go through the same again—no, not for a hundred dollars." It is related that a Scottish Canadian, on his voyage home to Scotland one summer, was found sleeping on deck by the captain, who roused him with a caution against sunstroke. "Sunstroke!" replied the Scotsman, with ineffable scorn; "it wad tak a' the sun atween here an' Greenock to thaw the Canada frost oot o' my head!" And we could almost say it took a week to thaw out the awful cold of this journey, though, with the exception of some little scars, we were none the worse for our frost-bite.

The description given of the musical excursion through Canada excites the most agreeable emotions. The party sang in every town, large and small, sometimes in villages that could in themselves have scarcely furnished an audience. One evening an old Scotsman drove forty miles to be present. On being shewn into the side-room, he seized Mr Kennedy's hand, saying warmly: "I dinna care sae muckle for your sangs—I just want to see a man that has seen Perth since I saw it!" It is mentioned that the old farmers were much affected by the songs. Frequently they would break out, in their enthusiasm, into loud comments. One night, at the conclusion of Hogg's song, 'When the kye comes hame,' a man slapped his knee, and

exclaimed with a burst of enthusiasm: 'That's meat and drink to me!'

In January 1876 the party were in Montreal, and as a matter of course were honoured with an invitation from the St Andrew's Society to a banquet on Burns's anniversary. They went, and were pleased with their reception. 'The Society is of a charitable nature, and the president gave some striking anecdotes of the good it had done to poor deserving Scotsmen in Montreal. On a subsequent occasion he took us through the St Andrew's Home, a well-kept institution, where the needy are supplied with food in the winter, and where Scottish immigrants are housed till they find employment. In one of the rooms there lately died a nephew of Sir Walter Scott'—probably one of Thomas's sons, an unfortunate Torturation. The banquet, we are told, was carried on with great glee. At its conclusion a procession was formed, and the Kennedies were escorted to the hotel in grand style, accompanied by strains on the bagpipe.

From Montreal to Quebec, and so on to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, the Kennedies did not slacken in their singing till they were on the shore of the Atlantic. They had literally sung from sea to sea, across a space of three thousand miles. As if that was not enough, they shipped for St John's, Newfoundland, and there finished their musical career. For some reason not explained their little piano was not available. This led to a difficulty not devoid of amusement. 'We had some difficulty and much fun in getting a piano for the hall here. In the first place, we called on a music-seller, who shewed us a cottage-piano half a tone flat. "I had to lower it," said he, "for some young ladies who sung at a local concert." The piano, we were told, would have to be taken out of the first-story window. Last time it was moved he had to saw off the banisters of the stairs, but that came to be troublesome and expensive. He dealt chiefly now in pianettes. "The fact is," said he, "the doors and stairs are so narrow that coffins and pianos have to be taken in and out of the windows." We found there were only two "grands" in the island—one at Harbour Grace and one at Mr B's, to whom accordingly we went. It was an ancient, highly carved instrument, with sonorous bass, but "tink-a-tanky" upper notes. Off next to see the piano of Mrs C., a widow, whom we surprised in the act of cleaning house. O yes; she had a "cottage"—and it was the most "cottagey" piano we ever saw, for the back of it rose almost as high as the ceiling. "It's rather out of tune," remarked Mrs C.; so we struck A to test it with our "fork," but the key gave no sound. "Just what I said," she exclaimed—"some of the notes are out of tune altogether."

Before quitting Newfoundland, the party made some excursions amongst the picturesque hills that overlook the harbour of St John's. A rapid voyage of seven days by steamer brought them to Liverpool; and soon afterwards they were settled in their dwelling in the southern suburbs of Edinburgh, as if they had only left it yesterday, and as if four years of singing round the world and seeing many distant lands were but a dream. Recommending the book* to the perusal of those

who take an interest in excursions such as are described, we only say in conclusion, See what can be done by persevering industry and intelligent enterprise to make the most of talents and opportunities!

W. C.

MY AUNT'S ATTENDANT.

I was supposed to have arrived at years of discretion, and in fact ought to have done so, as I was three-and-twenty when the circumstances which I am about to relate took place. But years do not always bring wisdom, and even some rather sharp experiences had failed to make me wise, for notwithstanding a very fair patrimony and my prospects as a barrister in *futuro*, I one fine morning awoke to the fact that I was in debt; a disagreeable dun was pursuing me pertinaciously, and I had not the means of satisfying his demands. Hitherto, I had torn up his letters and laughed at his threats; but a certain printed document presented personally to myself altered matters. Something must be done, and done quickly.

Money was imperative. I was not sufficiently hardened to contemplate applying to my intimate friends for a loan—the very sound of the word had an objectionable ring in it, and I had already overdrawn my banking account; consequently this pressing necessity for immediate funds was rather a painful position. I had to consider the question well before any conclusion could be arrived at. I thought over every plan and project, rejecting one after another as unfeasible, until at last a bright inspiration seized me. I had an aunt, an old lady, whom from my childhood I had been taught to hold in great awe, for she was not an ordinary aunt, but one to be considered and consulted, and not to offend or displease.

Aunt Dorothy Vyvian had been impressed upon us as one of the articles of our religion ever since I could remember. Aunt Dorothy had never been married, and she possessed in her own right a nice little fortune, securely invested, which gave her over a thousand a year. That will explain why Aunt Dorothy was not to be considered quite an ordinary aunt. I had been fortunate enough to be her god-son; so, in addition to the claim of consanguinity, had some grounds for supposing I was sure to be substantially remembered when the melancholy period of her death should arrive. She had a comfortable house in London, to which, as children, I and my two elder brothers occasionally were invited; and during those somewhat rare visits, the pressure we had to put upon ourselves to repress our juvenile spirits was something too great to be easily forgotten—for Aunt Dorothy abhorred riotous boys; whatever we did at home, we must beware how we let our voices be heard in her house. So thoroughly were we impressed with a wholesome dread of her, that we managed to pass muster in her opinion for three uncommonly good quiet boys, and her praise of myself in particular was regarded by our expectant parents as of most satisfactory augury.

But, as may be imagined, our good behaviour was kept exclusively for my Aunt Dorothy's awful presence. Whenever she was safely deposited within her small chocolate-coloured brougham, and had started for her triple turn right round the Park, an exercise she seldom or never missed, we boys would break forth, and the orderly drawing-

* Kennedy's *Colonial Travel*, a post-octavo volume, 1876.

room for the moment became, according to our old nurse's phraseology, 'like Bedlam broke loose,' until one of us spied the old coachman and the white horse approaching, when books were closed, booby-traps scattered, sofa-pillows restored to their legitimate resting-places, with such celerity, that before she had time to alight not a trace was left of the racket in which we had indulged in her absence.

On one occasion, however, a slight accident happened which had caused our hearts to jump into our mouths, and our very hair to stand on end. She had a favourite clock, a small but very perfect Dresden one; and during one of our riots, Charley, my eldest brother, knocked it from its pedestal: it fell fortunately on to a sofa which, by a lucky chance, happened to be under it, otherwise nothing could have saved it from being totally smashed. We stood aghast; our merriment came to a sudden conclusion; and we gazed for a moment with speechless horror at the delicate china article, fully believing that the first touch, however gentle, would cause it to fall into fragments. No time was to be lost, and we summoned up sufficient courage at last to lift it up and examine it. To our great joy, no damage was visible; not even Aunt Dorothy's keen eyes could detect what, after a very minute investigation, we discovered, a very minute chip off one of the china asters which adorned the base of it. It really was not an atom the worse, and even if it had been, we were far too afraid of her to muster up courage to confess. So we replaced the clock upon its velvet bracket with trembling fingers, and watched it with intense anxiety, expecting every moment that it would stop from some unseen internal injury; but it ticked on quite merrily, and we breathed again.

That was years and years ago. What changes and chances had come and gone since then! Yet how well I remember those days. How happy we were too. Aunt Dorothy did not seem to have grown much older: I could never imagine she had ever been young at all. She seemed to me a sort of evergreen that would remain an evergreen to the end of the chapter.

My brothers both went to India; my old home was not; and I had come to settle permanently in London. Excepting those absent brothers, the only person with whom I could claim kith or kin was Aunt Dorothy. So when I was in the above related strait for ready-money, it was not unnatural that her abundance should recur to me. It would all be mine some day: she had once or twice let fall as much; surely she could not object to giving me a little now. The more I thought of it the more feasible grew the idea; and I had almost made up my mind to go boldly and state my case to her; but I suddenly remembered, when my courage was quite up to the sticking-point and I had in fact fully decided, that Aunt Dorothy did not live alone—she had an attendant. This attendant, whose name was Mabel Turnour, had come to her not very long before in the capacity of maid, but had by degrees risen to the position of a regular companion, though my aunt invariably alluded to her as 'My attendant.'

My attendant was not more than four or five and twenty; her figure was of medium height, perfectly proportioned, and her face was one of the fairest I had ever seen. She had, from the plain attire of a domestic, gradually been emboldened to

assume in a small way the silks and even jewellery of her mistress's rank, although she had sufficient sense and taste to confine herself to quiet colours; and notwithstanding the humbleness of her real position, a more ladylike and refined-looking person could hardly have been found. She was wonderfully devoted to my aunt; at least so the latter informed me; and I never went to the house that I did not hear of some fresh perfection that had been discovered in this *rara avis*, Mabel Turnour.

It never occurred to me to be uneasy as to the chances of her coming between my aunt and me; so no feelings of that kind accounted for the dislike with which almost from the very first I regarded this girl. It was more an instinctive than an acknowledged aversion; and I was fully aware that my unfriendly sensations were thoroughly known to Miss Turnour; in fact under the guise of civility we hated each other. She was always sitting with my aunt when I called, consequently I knew a visit upon such an errand as mine would be useless; for how could I broach the subject of the loan in the presence of a third person: it was impossible. So mature deliberation decided me at last—I would write.

It was the pleasantest resolution I could have arrived at; and very soon I was poring over the construction and composition of such an epistle as would elicit a kind and speedy answer from Aunt Dorothy, and relieve me from further care as to my embarrassments. I took great pains over it, being anxious not to alarm or offend the old lady; but at last, after spoiling about a quire of notepaper, it was finished to my entire satisfaction, and I went out myself and posted it. The moment it slid out of my grasp into the depths below, doubts rose up of my prudence in having applied to her. What would she say? Perhaps disinherit me altogether. Well, it was done, and I could only hope for the best. I half hoped for an answer that same evening, as Aunt Dorothy was usually very prompt; but none came; nor was I even the next morning cheered by seeing her well-known diminutive handwriting on the breakfast-table. It was strange. The day wore on; the next one dawned, and still there came no answer. I even strolled down in the evening past her house, with the half-formed idea that she might have gone away for a day or two; but there she was; I could see right into the dimly-lit dining-room as I passed, and there, with Miss Turnour by her side, was Aunt Dorothy.

She was evidently offended. The breach must not be widened by another attack. This tacit ignoring must be regarded as a refusal. And when day after day passed bringing still no reply, I at last confided my anxieties to an old ally of mine, Tom Ruthven, who decided that the old lady had not liked it, and generously offered me himself the desired loan, which I gratefully accepted, and, may here add, faithfully repaid. So I no longer wanted the money; and as it would have been absurd to stand on my dignity with my aunt, I resolved to go to see her, and unless she herself alluded to it, to make no comment myself either upon my application or upon her silence regarding it.

I went in with some trepidation; but Aunt Dorothy had evidently got over my offence if she had been offended, for she seemed rather more

glad to see me than usual, though not a syllable escaped her lips about the letter. She and Miss Turnour were busily engaged in looking over some tradesmen's books when I appeared; and during my visit she informed me that several of them had sent in their accounts twice. As these accounts were supposed to have been settled weekly, she could not understand it: the amounts were considerable, and to pay them over again, as she seemed inclined to do, was perfectly absurd.

'Let me manage it,' I said. 'Shew me the books.'

'The books don't matter,' she answered; 'Mabel has paid them regularly, and naturally never thought of looking to see that they were receipted.'

'Did you pay them by cheque?' I asked next; 'for in that case it will be easy to prove it.'

'I paid them in money,' responded Miss Turnour, to whom my question had not been addressed.

'It is very strange,' I replied; 'such respectable shopkeepers as those could scarcely *all* combine to cheat you, aunt. I had better go and see after it, or get your solicitor to settle it.'

'Yes; do get your solicitor, Miss Vyvian—pray take Mr Geoffrey's advice.'

I was always called Mr Geoffrey at my aunt's, although my surname was like her own, Vyvian.

'I'm sure I'm very sorry to be reflected upon,' continued Miss Turnour, 'very, very sorry; and of course it's my fault.'

'If I don't blame you, who has a right to make reflections?' rejoined Aunt Dorothy, flashing an angry glance at me from under her gold spectacles. She was thinking of the letter now, I thought. 'Shut up the books, Mabel, and we can settle about them when Mr Geoffrey is gone.'

Miss Turnour gathered up quite a small pile of red glazed books, and tossed them in what I knew was meant to be a sort of slap at me on to the side-table, whilst she dashed, or pretended to dash away a tear, which my proposition, I concluded, was supposed to have elicited.

Aunt Dorothy waxed indignant against me, and ignoring my presence, sought to comfort and console her now violently indignant attendant, who sobbed abundantly, and wiped away, as far as I could see, not a single tear. The more she wept, the stronger grew my suspicion. Before I left the house I had come to the conclusion not only that she had robbed my aunt, but what perhaps—to be quite honest—touched me still more sharply, that she had suppressed or stolen my letter. I was convinced of it, and it would have taken a good deal to disabuse me of my belief. At present it would be useless to speak, but for the future I resolved quietly and steadily to watch Miss Turnour.

As time went on I gathered from my aunt that she had paid the bills over again. She admitted having done so with great unwillingness; and I received but small encouragement from her to inquire further into what she deemed was no earthly business of mine.

Two or three months after this, my aunt's and Miss Turnour's happy intercourse was interrupted by the arrival from India of a cousin of mine, consequently a niece of Aunt Dorothy's, a pretty girl of about fifteen. Ella Aubrey was not to be compared to Miss Turnour in point of regular beauty;

but how infinitely sweet and charming I thought her when we first met; what an innocent unsophisticated child she was, and how grieved and distressed I was to see the intimacy which was at once struck up between her and Mabel Turnour. They were never apart; but as my aunt fostered and encouraged the friendship between them to the last degree, I of course could only look on and regret what I saw no means of remedying.

Ella was not very cordial to me at first—a fact which I justly attributed to Miss Turnour's influence. However, her repulses were not very severe, and I trusted in due time we might become better friends. She had come from India accompanied by a servant, by name Marian Holdern; and before they had been a week with my aunt, a hue-and-cry got up that a magnificent black lace shawl was missing; and suspicion fell upon Marian. She, and no other, my aunt affirmed, was the thief.

Again I entreated that an investigation might be made; but this Aunt Dorothy peremptorily refused to listen to. Marian, weeping and protesting her innocence, was discharged; but as almost simultaneously with her departure, several other articles of value were missed, there seemed little doubt of her guilt, though my aunt still strenuously refused to put the matter into the hands of the police. Nothing I could say would induce her to do so; and as she was the sole sufferer, no one could complain; so Marian was summarily dismissed, and the black lace shawl and other valuable items were lost to Aunt Dorothy for ever. Shortly afterwards, the latter, accompanied by Ella and Miss Turnour, went down to Brighton for a little sea-air. They had been away about a fortnight when I was startled by receiving a telegram desiring me to come down at once. Something had happened; what, I was left to imagine, as I whirled rapidly down by the mid-day express. I read and re-read the telegram; but no surmises of mine had faintly come up to the real state of the case, for on my arrival, though I had guessed it must be a bad business to cause my hasty summons, I was horrified to find not only Miss Mabel Turnour, but my own little cousin in custody on the charge of theft!

Aunt Dorothy was distracted. Ella wept wildly at the sight of me, and from neither could I elicit anything beyond the most incoherent exclamations with regard to the whole affair. Miss Turnour, however, sat looking supremely cool and indifferent; but it was not from her I cared to derive my information. From other sources I gathered that several thefts had been committed in the lodgings where they were—silver spoons, money, and other valuables had vanished mysteriously; lastly, the landlady's watch had disappeared, and its abstraction had determined her to be trifled with no longer. She said nothing, but quietly summoned the police to her aid, who at once declared a general search must be instituted. The spoons were found in a box belonging to Miss Turnour, the watch in a small bag of Ella Aubrey's. Both protested their innocence—Miss Turnour with the coolest composure and indifference, Ella in abject terror and dismay. However, justice must be done, and the two were committed for trial at the quarter-sessions, my aunt's security being accepted for their appearance. Immediately afterwards the trio under my charge departed for London, there to remain until the trial took place.

I never for one moment suspected Ella of any guilt in the matter; but my convictions of her innocence would little avail her in the face of such circumstantial evidence as would inevitably be brought against her. My duty was plain, and I resolved not to shrink from doing it whether it offended Aunt Dorothy or not, for, strange to say, not even this catastrophe had in the faintest degree altered her towards Miss Turnour; in fact the hold she had upon her affections seemed rather to have increased than diminished.

I kept revolving plans in my head as we whirled towards London, conscious that under her fragile lace veil Miss Turnour, from her corner of the carriage, was eyeing me keenly, as if she would fain have pierced into the recesses of my heart, and found out what I was thinking of. I had hardly shaped my intentions yet, but one thing was quite clear to me—the only means for saving Ella was to convict Mabel Turnour; and to convict her, my first business was to discover her antecedents.

Aunt Dorothy sat in a painfully erect posture all the way up to town, hardly vouchsafing any reply to my well-meant remarks. Neither she nor Miss Turnour was too gracious; but I was sure I was a slight comfort to Ella, who was in a state of almost prostrate grief, feeling her new and dreadful position to the very uttermost. When we arrived at the station, I hurried them into the brougham which was waiting; and Aunt Dorothy then said something very indefinite and indistinct relative to my going to see them that evening: 'If you choose—dinner—seven—conversation—affairs.'

I just caught the disjointed words, and would fain have declined, had it not been for Ella's large pleading eyes and pale cheeks. They decided me; so it came to pass that I dined with Aunt Dorothy that evening. I had hardly entered the drawing-room before I noticed with astonishment that the Dresden clock, so well remembered in my youthful days, and so prized by Aunt Dorothy, was gone from the bracket on which it had stood for so many years.

'Why, Aunt Dorothy,' I exclaimed, 'what have you done with your clock?'

'My clock!' repeated my aunt, 'my clock! Why, nothing. What do you mean?' She hurriedly adjusted her spectacles, and gazed anxiously towards where it had formerly been.

'Ring the bell, Mabel!' she said almost fiercely; 'ring at once. I would not lose that clock for anything. Who can have dared to touch it?'

'Norris,' she said, addressing herself to the parlour-maid, who appeared directly, 'Norris, what is the meaning of that?' pointing to the vacant bracket.

'I don't know, ma'am,' answered Norris stolidly.

'You don't know! You *must* know! Don't tell any falsehoods, Norris. You know I won't be trifled with.'

'No, ma'am, I don't know, not no more than a infant,' affirmed Norris. 'I do know the clock's gone; but it's been gone since the day you went to Brighton; I noticed it to cook directly you were gone.'

'My Dresden clock! my grandmother's Dresden clock!' gasped my aunt. 'Norris, this won't do; tell the truth.'

'I've told it; I have indeed, ma'am.—Dinner's on the table, ma'am.'

This latter announcement interrupted further investigation; but I could see my aunt was troubled; however, knowing her weakness for Mabel, I resolved to give her no chance of consulting with me, but simply to go direct from her house and secure the services of a clever detective. If he could find the clock, the thief would soon be discovered. I could scarcely contain my impatience to get away, or my disgust at Miss Turnour's almost childish proposition to my aunt for promoting the chance of finding the missing clock; she was so sympathising and so puzzled that it required all my self-control to prevent myself breaking out before her. As far as I could hear, the latter simply intended to put up with her loss. So it behoved me to institute my search very secretly.

The following days were devoted by myself and a very able detective to an investigation of all the likely pawnbrokers' establishments in town, and in dragging to light more Dresden clocks than I had ever before dreamt existed. At last we came upon one which I felt almost certain was the one we wanted; but I had become almost puzzled with the numbers we had seen. However, I remembered the chip off the aster. I looked—there it was. Yet was that sufficient? Scarcely. It convinced me. But it was not enough. However, I recollected that several years before this precious heirloom had been intrusted to a jeweller in Regent Street to be cleaned: he might possibly be able to identify it. Accordingly, off we set; and on my recalling the circumstances to him, he recollected something about a Dresden clock, but so little as to be of no use to us. Just as we were leaving, he volunteered to allow us to look over his book of that particular year; and after much searching, Miss Vyvian's Dresden clock for cleaning was found duly entered, No. 1222.

'What does that mean?' I asked.

'The number of the clock,' he answered.

That was enough. Back we drove to the pawnbroker's to examine the clock there. The number corresponded. No. 1222 was Aunt Dorothy's clock. The description given of the person who had pawned it tallied exactly with Miss Turnour, all but the name, which she had given as Mrs Jones. However, the case was so clear that I had no difficulty in procuring a warrant for her apprehension, and, accompanied by a policeman, I proceeded to my aunt's house. Miss Turnour was sitting on a low stool by the fire, close by my aunt's chair, with the easy familiarity of a spoilt child. Her fair face had a bright flush upon it, which faded slightly when I advanced and sternly charged her with the theft.

Aunt Dorothy shrieked; and Ella, who was sitting looking the picture of misery when I entered, hid her face in her hands. But Mabel Turnour, looking more beautiful than I had ever seen her look, rose up and faced me, only the now deathly pallor of her countenance betraying her inward fears. Outwardly, she was as bold as a lion.

'Don't you see it all, aunt?' I said. 'Don't you see how you have harboured a viper, and how she has injured that poor innocent child there? I have a warrant to arrest her.'

'What have you done?' cried Aunt Dorothy in sudden horror. 'How have you dared to interfere? Meddling officious boy!'

Miss Turnour laughed mockingly; but her hour

had come. Even Aunt Dorothy was obliged to own that for Ella's sake Mabel's boxes must undergo an investigation. And, not to weary by details, I need only say that search resulted in the discovery, amongst many other things of minor consequence, of fifty-six letters addressed to my aunt, which she had opened, and suppressed, mine amongst others—pawn-tickets, empty spirit-bottles, and innumerable other articles. The case seemed clear enough to convict her ten times over; and she was lodged in jail, parting from Aunt Dorothy with much assumed grief; whilst the latter shrank from me with ill-concealed aversion, and was far more filled with indignation than gratitude for my having taken so much trouble to deliver her from such a woman.

I have said she was good-looking; and her beauty was so powerful that when her trial came on, notwithstanding the overwhelming evidence against her, the police magistrate, plainly biassed by her fair face, intimated an intention to discharge her, and was with difficulty persuaded to remand her.

Ere her next appearance, we, by the influence of our solicitor, had induced Aunt Dorothy to obtain discharge of her bail for Mabel on the Brighton charge. Owing to the refusal of the pawnbroker to swear that it was she, and no other, who had pawned the clock, the benefit of the doubt was cordially granted her by the magistrate, and he dismissed the case. But a Sussex constable re-arrested her on the Brighton charge, as she was retiring; and in due course she was tried there, and sentenced to six months' hard labour; the prosecutrix there withdrawing, of her own free will, all charges against Ella. She received her sentence coolly. And when it was over, I heard that a man, who said he was her husband, was waiting to take her away. Some years afterwards, I heard that she and a notorious housebreaker with whom she consorted had been sentenced to penal servitude.

The foregoing narrative, which is founded upon incidents that actually occurred, is another illustration of the evils of indiscriminate acquaintance-ship. In my aunt's case, it turned out that, in answer to her advertisement for a maid, a young woman of prepossessing appearance and manner had applied and had been engaged, without proper investigation as to her character, and, as was afterwards ascertained, solely on the strength of a *forged testimonial*.

TERMITES.

THE wonderful habits and instincts of bees and ants are well known, and have very justly excited universal admiration and astonishment. The habits of the Termite or white ant are in some respects even more wonderful, though probably not so well known. We venture, therefore, to offer our readers a few particulars concerning these extraordinary insects.

Though called white ants, they belong to an entirely different order of insects from the common ant. As many as twenty-four different species are known to exist, nine of which belong to Africa, nine to America, two to Asia, and two to Europe. Like ants, they live in societies, and are divided into males, females, and neuters. The last, however, consist of two distinct classes or 'castes'—the workers and the soldiers. Apparently they do

not pass through complete metamorphoses, for on issuing from the egg they do not differ in any respect from the adult except in size.

The males and perfect females have four large transparent wings, the second pair being rather smaller than the first. At the beginning of the rainy season they leave the nest in myriads and pair. They then shed their wings and fall to the ground. So eagerly are they sought after by birds and other enemies that very few couples escape being devoured. The survivors are carefully sheltered by the workers, and become the kings and queens of new colonies. They are much larger than the workers and soldiers, and are kept in close confinement, the doors of their cell being too small to permit the egress of either. The queen is always found in a gravid condition, her abdomen enormously distended with eggs. 'This soft, whitish beast,' says M. Michelet, 'a belly rather than a being, is as large at least as one's thumb; a traveller professes to have seen one of the size of a crawfish. The larger she is, the more fruitful, the more inexhaustible, this terrible insect-mother seems to be the more adored by the fanatical rabble. She seems to be their beau-ideal, their poetry, their enthusiasm. If you carry away with any rubbish a portion of their city, you see them instantly set to work at the breach to build an arch which may protect the venerated head of the mother, to reconstruct her royal cell, which will become (if there are sufficient materials) the centre, the base, of the restored city. I am not astonished, though, at the excessive love which this people shew for this instrument of fecundity. If all other species did not combine to destroy them, this truly prodigious mother would make them masters of the world, and—what shall I say?—its only inhabitants. The fish alone would be left, but insects would perish. It suffices to be remembered that the mother-bee does not produce in a year what the female white ant can produce in a day. By her they would be enabled to devour everything; but they are weak and tasty, and so everything devours them.' The number of eggs produced by a single termite is prodigious. She is said to lay them at the rate of one in every second, and as the process of oviposition continues without interruption for many weeks, and even months, the number of eggs produced by one of these insects in a year amounts to many millions.

The workers and soldiers are wingless, and quite distinct from the males and females from the moment they emerge from the egg, and do not therefore acquire their special characteristics in consequence of any particular course of training or food. The workers of *Termes bellicosus*, the largest of the species, are about the size of a large ant, to which they bear some resemblance. Their bodies are very soft, but they are furnished with mandibles which are capable of destroying the hardest substances. Their duties are to build the habitations and to keep them in repair when finished, to attend upon the royal couple, to nurse and rear the young from the egg upwards, and to lay in a plentiful stock of provisions.

The soldiers number only about a hundredth part of the community. They are twice as long, and weigh fifteen times as much as the workers. Their heads are horny and much larger than their bodies; their mandibles are larger than those of the workers, and more adapted for weapons of

warfare than for implements of labour. They are the defenders of the colonies and the maintainers of good order, and most faithfully and energetically do they discharge their duties. Their bite at once draws blood, and so tenacious is their gripe that they will rather die than let go their hold. The negroes, on account of their bare feet and scanty clothing, are forced to beat a hasty retreat if they venture to attack one of the hives. Yet strange to say, these formidable heroes, upon whom the safety of the numerous family so largely depends, are totally blind; and most amusing it is to see them, when attacked, moving their monstrous heads from side to side, opening and shutting their jaws.

Their habitations are constructed with wondrous skill. These 'termitaria,' as they are called by naturalists, are conical mounds surrounded by cones decreasing in size as they recede from the central mass, and are formed of earth worked into a hard compact mass. They are strong enough to bear the weight of a man. Indeed, M. Fignier relates that buffaloes mount upon them and use them as watch-towers from which they can see if the lion or the panther is threatening them. These mounds attain a height of from ten to twelve feet, and one traveller gives twenty feet. The walls of these gigantic structures are from fifteen to twenty feet thick. The entrance is at a considerable distance from the mound, and is connected with the interior of the abode by underground passages. Each 'termitarium' consists of a vast number of cells and connecting galleries formed of clay or particles of vegetable matter glued together with the saliva of the workers. On a level with the ground and in the centre is the palace of the royal couple; the chambers encircling the royal apartment are inhabited by the workers and the soldiers; while the outer cells serve as storehouses, which always contain an abundant supply of provisions. The egg-cells or nurseries are supported upon pillars, which rest upon the royal cell. Above the nurseries there is a large hollow space about one-third as large as the whole middle cone, which not only serves to ventilate the nurseries but also lowers the temperature of the whole of the interior. The corridors which maintain communication from one cell to another are at a depth of three or four feet from the surface. These are intersected by smaller passages, some of which are spiral. A termitarium is not always the exclusive work of one species, but may have been built by several working in conjunction. When this is the case, it is observed that each species has a distinct mode of compacting the materials, and confines its labour to a particular spot.

A traveller relates that, being anxious to see these curious little creatures build, he made a breach in a nest with his hatchet. A soldier instantly appeared, who was speedily followed by two or three more, and in a very short time a whole army was collected. Owing to their blindness some confusion ensued, and it was an amusing sight to see them tumbling over one another and rolling down the sides of the hillock biting everything that came in their way. They soon recovered themselves, however, and the bustle subsided. As the traveller made no further breach, the soldiers at length retired. Thereupon our rushed the little labourers in crowds, each carrying a load of tempered mortar, and depositing it on the edge of the

hole, they hurried back for more. So numerous were these tiny builders and so rapidly did they work, that in half an hour the breach was repaired. Such is the number, size, and regularity of these edifices in some regions, that they have been compared to a collection of negro huts.

The species named *Termes mordan* and *Termes atron* build regular columns, surmounted with projecting cone-shaped capitals. These curious dwellings are about twenty inches in height. They are constructed of black clay, and have the appearance of huge mushrooms. A few termites build their nests around the branch of a tree. They are as large as a sugar-barrel; and though only composed of small pieces of wood stuck together, they are able to withstand the storms of the tropics.

The habits of the marching termites are also very interesting. The English traveller Smeathman, who studied these insects with great care when in South Africa, one day saw an army of them march past him. His attention was first attracted by a loud hiss. This noise caused him to move a few paces from the path, when he saw an army of termites coming out of a hole in the ground. They came out in vast hordes and with great rapidity. At a short distance from the hole they separated into two columns, composed almost entirely of labourers, 'twelve or fifteen abreast, crowded as closely as sheep in a drove,' with here and there a soldier. While these were hastening forward, a great many soldiers appeared, scattered along both sides of the two companies, some standing still, others marching up and down the lines, but all evidently prepared for any attack that might be made upon the labourers. 'But the most extraordinary part of the march was the conduct of some of the soldiers, who, having mounted the plants which grew here and there, had placed themselves on the points of the leaves, which were raised ten or fifteen feet from the ground, and overlooked the army marching below. Every now and then one or other of these would beat with his forceps upon the leaf, making a noise similar to that made among the warrior species. The signal produced the same effect upon the marching white ants, for instantly the whole army returned the noise, and obeyed by increasing their pace with the utmost haste.' He saw the two columns at length unite and descend into the earth by two or three other holes. They continued marching past him for more than an hour without any apparent diminution of their number.

The accounts of the destruction caused by the termites would be incredible, were they not too well attested to be doubted. They will eat into the hardest substances, particularly wood, which seems to be a favourite article of diet with them. Stanley, the discoverer of Livingstone, relates that on one occasion upon examining certain stores he found that these insects had not only devoured the box in which the guns were packed, but had even eaten the gun-stocks. In dwelling-houses the utmost care has to be taken to guard against their depredations. Bed-posts and the legs of tables and chairs are placed in vessels containing water. Nothing to which they can gain access escapes their voracity. Boots, shoes, and the contents of trunks, if left upon the ground, are destroyed in a single night. They rarely venture in sight, and so secretly are their operations performed, that

the utmost precautions of the inmates are often rendered abortive. Having extended their galleries beneath the house, they will perforate the floors, hollow out the beams and rafters, and if not speedily destroyed, will render the house unsafe for habitation. They always leave a thin shell of the object attacked, so that detection is impossible; and curious stories are told of the manner in which articles of furniture, &c. which have been operated upon by these invisible destroyers have fallen to pieces on the slightest touch, much to the chagrin and often astonishment of the beholder.

At La Rochelle, Rochefort, and other towns in the south of France (into which country they are supposed to have been unintentionally imported with some bales of goods at the end of the last century), many houses have been completely undermined by them. At Tournay, Charente, the floor of a dining-room gave way during a dinner-party, and the occupants were precipitated into the cellar. At La Rochelle the termites took up their abode in the prefect's house. One day a clerk on opening the box in which the government documents had been deposited found them, as he thought, complete and uninjured; but on raising the topmost leaf, he saw only a small heap of rubbish. The termites had bored through the wood and the cardboard, and had eaten the parchments, having taken their usual precaution of leaving no trace of their handiwork on the exterior.

These destructive insects are not without their use in the economy of nature; not only do they act as scavengers, by devouring animal and vegetable refuse, but they serve as food to the natives. Some idea of the esteem with which this article of diet is regarded by the latter may be formed from an expression made to Dr Livingstone by one of their chiefs. One day, as they were discussing the merits of certain delicacies, the chief asked the doctor if he had ever tasted white ants. Livingstone replied that he had not. 'Well, if you had,' said the other, 'you never could have desired to eat anything better!'

UMBRELLA GOSSIP.

UMBRELLAS were used in Paris before London. They were first carried in the metropolis by one Jonas Hanway, who underwent a species of martyrdom from public ridicule while indulging in this luxury. Even ladies did not take kindly to the umbrella until Queen Anne's reign, when we find Swift make mention of them. Cowper in *The Task* also alludes to these useful articles which were first kept at coffee-houses, and borrowed by the frequenters. They were then very cumbersome, and were fitted with a ring at the top, wherewith to carry and hang them up, while instead of handles, the sticks were furnished with knobs to rest on the ground, as parasols are now. The materials used in their construction were leather, feathers, and afterwards oiled silk; but the last sometimes stuck, and could not easily be folded. In our young days, sixty years since, umbrellas were of blue or green cotton—heavy and clumsy to an odious degree. At length the fashion improved. As the usefulness of umbrellas

became more apparent, lighter frames and better covering material gradually came into vogue, until the present slimmness of perfection was attained. Various additions to umbrellas have been suggested by people, as, for example, the fitting of small glass windows in them, through which to look out ahead when beating against the slanting rain; a theory that would break down in two senses, if reduced to practice. An American lady lately devised some ingenious system of cords attaching the umbrella to the dress, which would counteract the effects of the wind, so undecided seems Boreas in his movements the moment we hoist one. Though in one sense a cumbersome companion, the umbrella is not devoid of usefulness, whether we consider it as a walking-stick, the means of hailing a 'bus or turning aside the charge of a mad bull, or of getting introduced to a lady, unprovided with one on a wet day.

On the other hand, as some drawbacks are inseparable from most blessings, umbrellas are on many occasions a decided nuisance. Picture-galleries and other places only too practically remind us that umbrellas, like dogs, are not everywhere admitted; while cloak-rooms at concerts and theatres have a way of sadly confusing owners with this kind of property. It is this that produces such exquisitely satirical advertisements as the following: 'If the gentleman who took the silk umbrella from Halle's concert last night by mistake, and left the gingham in its place, will return the same to the undersigned's address, he will oblige.' Many people above any suspicions of kleptomania have a pleasant knack of absently taking the best umbrella from their friends' hall-stands; a remark which, by the by, is not inapplicable to hats. Robinson Crusoe was, we verily believe, the only individual of our acquaintance who could deposit his huge 'Gamp' in his vestibule with the happy assurance that he would not find an inferior one in its place on the morrow.

Are there any, we wonder, who, laying their hands on their hearts, can conscientiously declare that they never forgot their umbrella in a shop, 'bus, train, theatre, church, or private house? We have heard friends, finding their searches after this kind of left luggage getting monotonous, vow in exasperation that their umbrellas ought to be hung round their necks. Another evil is the liability of umbrellas to suddenly collapse when you are rounding a corner, for they are worse than useless when rain brings its brother element, the wind, to its assistance. A mere allusion to the drippings of umbrellas down one's neck, when on the knifeboard of a crowded omnibus, is enough to call up pathetic reminiscences in the mind of every citizen. But the situation most to be pitied was that of an Irish umbrella-mender whom the writer once noticed on the deck of a ferry steamer. It was raining torrents, and there he stood unsheltered in the midst of it all, with the shattered wrecks of about a dozen umbrellas under his arm. 'Sure it's mighty hard anyway,' he at last soliloquised, 'me gittin' wet like this, and all them umbrellas wid me, but not wan's any use at all.'

The observant declare there is as much indication of a man's character in the style of umbrella he carries, as in any other portion of his belongings. They say a Manchester man is *always* known by his umbrella, and indeed, poor fellow, few (excepting perhaps the Glasgow man) need one more than he does. An able writer in the *New Quarterly*, describing his hero's introduction into an editor's waiting-room where others were assembled, makes the following remarks concerning umbrellas, which in some measure bear out the foregoing observations: 'Edward Wynter took a chair and sat down. Every one in the room had a bundle of papers or a note-book in his hand, and every one of them leaned on a stout umbrella. Three of the party were men, two ladies. A tall man with a red face, a very stout man with a red face, a third man of a shadowy presence, who kept in the darkest corner of the room, and planting his umbrella between his knees, as all the others did, seemed to be lost in contemplation of its knob. Edward Wynter saw that he ought to have brought an umbrella; he had come among them as a man unarmed.'

King Koffee's umbrella, brought home by General Wolsley, 'which was the cause of so much merriment amongst your special correspondents, was in the eyes of the Ashantees by no means the least amongst their losses. It was called in their language "Bo Haman"—the destroyer of nations—and represented to them a greater loss than would have been that of its Queen's colours to a British army.' We find elsewhere the subjoined details of this wonderful structure: 'The stick, which is of unornamented plain wood, measures eleven feet from top to bottom. When open, the diameter is seven feet some inches, and the length of the covering when shut more than six feet. The material is velvet, partly crimson and partly black, in different-sized squares with gold trimmings. Four lions' claws, roughly carved and gilt, are symmetrically placed, and some square pieces of various objects are distributed all round as fetiches or charms. They consist of the skin of animals and serpents, and one small piece of scarlet woollen material with a white border. These are supposed to be sacred emblems, and to have received some peculiar endowment from the priests.' King Koffee's umbrella is now one of the objects of curiosity in the Museum of Science and Art at Edinburgh.

It is surprising what an amount of amusement the umbrella, regarded from a comic point of view, has afforded the public. Where would the firm of 'Gamp,' 'Brown,' 'Sloper,' and Company be without their stock-in-trade of gingham and whalebone? The low-comedy man of the theatre might just as well forget his part on the stage as his lumbering umbrella. What, for instance, would Paul Pry be without *his*? What effective scenes, too, are introduced into burlesque through the medium of variously coloured umbrellas; and what an exponent of ridicule they become in the hands of the comic artists! If this article is particularly cumbersome about the handle, has clumsy whalebone ribs starting through its skin, no ferule, and a piece of rope dividing its ruins with a kind of waist in the middle, then is the negro stump orator furnished with the emblem of eloquence, and the souls of his audience happy in consequence. On more than one occasion our subject came in for its share of Dickens's humour, and Mrs Gamp will be

chiefly immortalised through her celebrated representative of the umbrella order; her name being just as popular a term for umbrellas, as Dolly Varden's was for hats and dresses. In the description of Mrs Gamp's apartment it is thus alluded to: 'Lastly, Mrs Gamp's umbrella, which, as something of great price and rarity, was displayed with particular ostentation.' In *Bleak House*, Mrs Bagnet's umbrella, which had been her faithful companion in all parts of the world, is thus pictured to us: 'It is of no colour known in this life, and has a corrugated wooden crook for a handle, with a metallic ornament let into its beak or prow; which ornamental object has not that tenacious capacity of sticking to its post that might be desired in an article long associated with the British army. The old girl's umbrella is of a flabby habit of waist, and seems to be in need of stays. She never puts it up, but uses it to point out joints of meat, or to arrest the attention of tradesmen by a friendly poke.'

If any one wishes to study human nature in the bud as it were, let that person lend an umbrella—an old one will do—to a child, and see the airs of importance the small individual at once assumes, concentrating for the time all the purposes of its existence to the display of that article. Indeed we are persuaded that as much profitable instruction could be derived from moralising on an umbrella, as was afforded by Dean Swift's *Meditations on a Broomstick*. In short, without umbrellas of one sort or other, what should we do? As things stand, the umbrella is our walking companion, our friend, but scarcely our protector against persistent rain. The man has yet to arise who can clothe his fellow-creatures with apparel neat in appearance, moderate in price, and comfortably waterproof.

SONNET TO A PAIR OF OLD BOOTS.

[Written, seventy years ago, by a gentleman now deceased, and found among his papers.]

YE two companions of my wintry way,
Oft have we trudged it many a tedious mile
Through sloop, and mire, and mud, and clinging clay,
And paced along with true pedestrian toil.

Now sore against my will we part at length,
For ye are both grown old and both worn out;
Your tough tanned bodies have resigned their strength,
And waters pierce your soles that once were stout.

What boots it now that you were boots of yore
So neatly shining, supple, smooth, and black;
No patent lustre can your gloss restore,
No cobbler can recall your value back.

So man shall fail, and all his works to boot,
Nor art nor medicine decrepitude recruit.

CLOSE OF THE LAMBERT FUND.

We have to intimate that the fund raised for the benefit of James Lambert is now closed; a sufficient sum having been collected for the purpose in view.

Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH.

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